

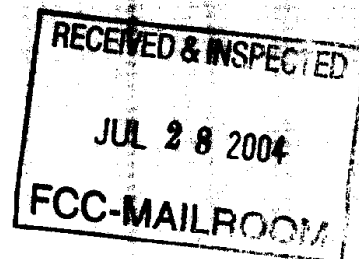


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July 19, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Commissioner Michael Copps
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 03-135

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners Martin, Copps, Abernathy and Adelstein:

Government policy that denies poor Americans basic services and suppresses the power of consumers frustrates those very segments of the population most in need of the government's watchful eyes. In the African-American community, we are forever exposed to rhetoric from the corporate community encouraging us to use the tools afforded by the free-market and leverage our strength as consumers. And just when we do, we come face-to-face with proposals to impose access charges and new fees to prepaid calling card services. We oppose this idea.

Let us take a very real, very practical look at who uses prepaid calling cards in the African-American community; consumers living on fixed-incomes; consumers with bad credit; students calling home from school; military personnel living away from home domestically or overseas. African-Americans are represented in each of these categories and would feel the stress of additional charges and fees in their wallets, limiting their ability to keep; in touch with loved ones.

Many consumers who use prepaid calling cards often have no other alternative. A number of phone service providers market these cards to low-income communities because the demand exists for affordable phone service with no additional financial commitment. At a few cents per minute, consumers purchase only the minutes they can buy at that moment. Quality connections without contracts or deposits—what better way to service a large market with limited resources?

The existing system demonstrates a textbook success story for pro-business, pro-consumer market forces working for the benefit of the service provider and the user. Changing the system to add new charges and fees only to load corporate coffers cannot be a policy the FCC should adopt and promote. Choose to keep the burden of new fees off the backs of consumers who are working to overcome economic disadvantage. Please do not impose new fees on prepaid calling cards.

Sincerely,

Reverend Willie T. Barrow
Chairperson Emeritus
Rainbow/PUSH Coalition

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., Founder & President
Martin L. King, Chairman
www.rainbowpush.org

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